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Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PA-02 H-02
SSM-05 SIG-03 SSO-00 INRE-00 PM-05 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /107 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
PA/PRS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM
----------072745 190550Z /15
O 190350Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USNATO
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR
DOD

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JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
NSC WASHDC 0000
USICA

UNCLAS STATE 099986

CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - APRIL 18

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR APRIL 18, 1978. FYI ONLY, SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS THOMAS RESTON.

Q. ON THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON, YOU SAID LAST WEEK THERE WAS SOME KIND OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING NEW ON IT?
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A. NO.

Q. DISCUSSIONS ARE STILL GOING ON?

A. I THINK YESTERDAY I SAID IN ANNOUNCING THAT AMBASSADOR ATHERTON WAS GOING OUT TO THE AREA -- I THINK HE'S LEAVING TOMORROW -- THAT I COULDN'T RULE OUT THAT THE SUBJECT WOULD COME UP IN HIS DISCUSSIONS IN THE AREA.

Q. THERE ARE SOME REPORTS FROM THE VANCE STOPOVER THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WILL ISSUE A NEW INITIATIVE ON THE MIDEAST AFTER THE PANAMA VOTE. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT?

A. WE ARE PRESENTLY IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PARTIES TO DETERMINE HOW W;E CAN BEST MOVE THE PEACE PROCESS FORWARD. AS WE HAVE SAID IN THE PAST, WE WILL NOT HESITATE TO PUT FORWARD OUR OWN IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS WHEN WE THINK THEY WOULD HELP THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

WE HAVE NOT YET REACHED ANY DEFINITIVE DECISION ABOUT POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS, BUT THIS WILL BE A SUBJECT TAKEN UP BY AMBASSADOR ATHERTON ON HIS TRIP.

Q. CAN YOU GIVE US AN IDEA OF WHETHER THE TIME FRAME FOR THIS POSSIBLE INITIATIVE -- YOU SEEMED TO BE CAREFUL NOT TO RULE OUT A NEW INITIATIVE -- IS SUCH THAT IT

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COULD BE TAKEN BY ATHERTON? ARE YOU LEAVING OPEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT ONE OF THESE NEW IDEAS OR SUGGESTIONS THAT YOU SAY YOU RESERVE THE RIGHT TO BROACH MIGHT BE GOING WITH ATHERTON WHEN HE LEAVES THIS WEEK -- OR WHEN YOU SAY WE HAVE NOT YET REACHED ANY DEFINITIVE DECISION ABOUT POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS, DOES THAT PRECLUDE ATHERTON BEING THE BEARER OF A NEW INITIATIVE WHEN HE GOES TO THE MIDDLE EAST THIS WEEK?
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A. I THINK I SAID YESTERDAY THAT AMBASSADOR ATHERTON WOULD NOT BE CARRYING ANY SPECIFIC NEW AMERICAN PROPOSALS WITH HIM ON HIS JOURNEY.

AS TO POSSIBLE FUTURE AMERICAN INITIATIVES, I THINK WHAT I AM SAYING TODAY IS THAT WILL BE ONE OF THE SUBJECTS WHICH AMBASSADOR ATHERTON WILL BE DISCUSSING WITH THE PARTIES -- I.E., THE TIMING OR ADVISABILITY OF THE AMERICAN SIDE COMING FORTH WITH NEW INITIATIVES.

Q. IS THE DEPARTMENT INVOLVED IN ANY WAY IN ARRANGING A SADAT VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES?

A. I THINK I'M RIGHT WHERE I HAVE BEEN ON THAT ONE. WE KNOW OF NO PLANS FOR MR. SADAT TO COME TO THE UNITED STATES -- SAY, IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THERE HAD BEEN SOME TALK ABOUT HIM COMING TO ATLANTA TO ADDRESS SUCH A MEETING; BUT I THINK YOU MIGHT ASK THE EGYPTIAN EMBASSY WHETHER THEY KNOW OF ANY PLANS -- CONCRETE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

AS TO YOUR SPECIFIC QUESTION, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER WE ARE INVOLVED IN ARRANGING A MEETING. IT'S JUST MY IMPRESSION THAT NO VISIT IS PLANNED.

Q. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EQUATION, PRIME MINISTER BEGIN IS SUPPOSED TO BE COMING HERE AT THE END OF THIS MONTH FOR A WEEK, OR EARLY IN MAY. IS THE ADMINISTRATION PLANNING TO RECEIVE HIM IN WASHINGTON DURING HIS TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES?

A. I THINK I SAID YESTERDAY THAT MR. BEGIN OF COURSE
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IS ALWAYS A WELCOME GUEST HERE IN THE UNITED STATES. I COULDN'T RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT MEET WITH PRESIDENT CARTER OR WITH SECRETARY VANCE WHILE HE IS HERE ON WHAT IS A PRIVATE VISIT, BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY DEFINITE PLANS FOR SUCH A MEETING.

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Q. HAS YOUR GOVERNMENT RECEIVED ANY FORMAL RESPONSES FROM THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT ON THE AMERICAN PROPOSALS FOR SOLVING THE MIDDLE EAST ISSUE?

A. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE STATE OF PLAY IS ON THAT. I THINK THAT WHERE THIS IS MOVING NOW IS TOWARD AMBASSADOR ATHERTON AND HIS ACTIVITIES AND CONSULTATIONS WITH THE PARTIES OUT THERE.

Q. IS THE MAJOR AMERICAN EFFORT AT THIS POINT, TO RECONVENE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE?

A. I DON'T THINK I COULD CHARACTERIZE WHAT THE MAJOR EMPHASIS OF AMERICAN POLICY IS IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN THAT WAY. ARE YOU REFERRING TO SOME SPECIFIC SUGGESTION?

A. I AM REFERRING TO A SUGGESTION THAT EVOLVES OUT OF THE CEAUSESCU - CARTER COMMUNIQUE AND CERTAIN STATEMENTS THAT THE ROMANIAN LEADER MADE SUBSEQUENT TO THE COMMUNIQUE'S RELEASE.

A. LET ME SAY THAT THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU ARE IN THAT COMMUNIQUE AND I AM NOT ABLE TO GO BEYOND IT OR TO INTER-PRET IT FOR YOU.

Q. LAST WEEK AMBASSADOR ATHERTON WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT WE ARE NOT GOING TO WAIT FOREVER FOR THE ISRAELI

RESPONSES. COULD YOU TELL US IF THIS TRIP TO JERUSALEM HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH WHAT HE SAID LAST WEEK?

A. I THINK HE IS GOING OUT THERE TO DISCUSS A WHOLE

VARIETY OF ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS; AND TO GET SOME CLARIFICATIONS AS TO WHERE WE ALL STAND. AND I WOULDN'T LINK HIS VISIT TO ANY ONE PARTICULAR PART OF THE MOSAIC.

Q. IS THERE ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TRIP BY ATHERTON AND THE TIMING BY WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION WILL SUBMIT THE AIRCRAFT PACKAGE TO THE HILL?

A. NO.

Q. WHEN WILL YOU DO IT?

A. I DON'T THINK WE HAVE A PRECISE DATE YET FOR THE

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SUBMISSION OF THE PACKAGE.

Q. WILL IT BE SHORTLY AFTER THE PANAMA CANAL VOTE?

A. IT WILL BE SHORTLY AFTER THE PANAMA CANAL THING, BUT I DON'T THINK A PRECISE DATE HAS BEEN SET. I WOULD BE GLAD TO CHECK THAT FOR YOU TO SEE WHETHER WE HAVE GOT A PRECISE DATE.

Q. DO YOU THINK THAT MR. BEGIN'S VISIT TO THE STATES WOULD HAVE ANY IMPACT ON THE PROPOSED AMERICAN PLANE SALE TO THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND TO ISRAEL?

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A. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO ASSESS THAT FOR YOU.

Q. DID YOU SEE ANYTHING NEW IN THE ISRAELI POSITION FOLLOWING THE STATEMENT LAST SUNDAY ON 242?

A. WE HAVE RECEIVED THE REPORT ABOUT A MEETING, FROM OUR EMBASSY IN ISRAEL, WHICH WE ARE NOW STUDYING.

AS I SAID YESTERDAY, WE WERE HAVING DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES WITH THE ISRAELIS ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE STATEMENT PUT OUT BY THE CABINET; AND WE HAVE RECEIVED THAT REPORT NOW AND WE ARE STUDYING IT BUT I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO SAY AT THIS TIME THAN I SAID YESTERDAY.

WE, OF COURSE, HAVE ONGOING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PARTIES ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE PEACE PROCESS, INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL, AND I WOULD POINT OUT THAT AMBASSADOR ATHERTON IS RETURNING TO THE MIDDLE EAST TOMORROW.

Q. INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK?

A. IT SAYS, "INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL," BUT I THINK PROBABLY, OBVIOUSLY, THAT IS ONE ASPECT WHICH HAS TO BE RESOLVED IN ACHIEVING A JUST AND LASTING PEACE.

Q. BUT HOW MUCH WITHDRAWAL? IT DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT HOW MUCH. JUST A LITTLE BIT OF WITHDRAWAL?

A. THAT'S RIGHT, IT DOES NOT SAY ANYTHING ABOUT HOW MUCH WITHDRAWAL.

Q. WOULD IT BE FAIR TO INFER THAT ON A SIMPLE READING OF THE ISRAELI CABINET STATEMENT, THE STATE DEPARTMENT WASN'T SURE EXACTLY WHAT THE ISRAELIS WERE TRYING TO CONVEY?

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A. IT WOULD BE FACTUAL TO STATE THAT OUR AMBASSADOR IN TEL AVIV WENT IN TO HAVE A DISCUSSION WITH THE ISRAELIS ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE STATEMENT WHICH WAS ISSUED BY THE ISRAELI CABINET.

Q. DID THE STATE DEPARTMENT INSTRUCT THE AMBASSADOR TO GO IN AND HAVE THAT DISCUSSION?

A. I AM NOT SURE, BUT I WOULD ASSUME SO.

Q. WELL, WOULD IT THEN BE FACTUAL TO STATE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOUND THE STATEMENT SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS AND FELT THE NEED TO SEEK SOME CLARIFICATION?

A. I THINK WE WANTED TO GET SOME CLARIFICATION, YES, AND WE ARE STUDYING THE RESULTS OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS NOW -- AND OBVIOUSLY, THE TEXT OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT ITSELF.

Q. WHEN BEGIN WAS HERE, PRESIDENT CARTER MADE SOME SUGGESTIONS TO HIM ABOUT POSSIBLE WAYS TO WORK OUT OF THIS IMPASSE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. NOW, DAYAN MAKES A STATEMENT ABOUT 242. AND AS THE NEXT STEP, AMBASSADOR ATHERTON TAKES OFF FOR THE MIDDLE EAST. IS THERE A LINK TO BE DRAWN BETWEEN THESE THREE EVENTS?

A. WELL I THINK I DENIED A LINK YESTERDAY THAT AMBASSA-DOR ATHERTON WAS GOING BACK TO THE MIDDLE EAST BECAUSE OF THE CABINET DECISION ON 242, OR BECAUSE OF THE DAYAN INTERVIEW -- SO THAT IS A LINK THAT I WOULD DENY. THIS PRESENT VISIT WHICH WILL BEGIN TOMORROW WAS DECIDED UPON BEFORE THE SECRETARY WENT TO AFRICA.

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NOW AS TO WHETHER THERE IS A LINK BETWEEN AMBASSADOR ATHERTON'S TRIP TO THE AREA AND WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID TO PRIME MINISTER BEGIN WHEN HE WAS HERE -- I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FOR YOU ON THAT.

I THINK, AS I SAID YESTERDAY, WE THOUGHT THAT NOW WOULD BE A GOOD AND IMPORTANT TIME FOR THE AMBASSADOR TO RETURN TO THE AREA TO DISCUSS A WHOLE, BROAD RANGE OF ISSUES.

Q. BUT YOU DO NOT GO SO FAR AS TO DENY A LINK BETWEEN IT AS YOU DO BETWEEN THE DAYAN STATEMENT AND THE TRIP?

A. NO, I DO NOT GO SO FAR, BUT THAT IS REALLY BECAUSE I

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DO NOT HAVE ANYTHING HERE I CAN SEE. I AM JUST NOT IN
A POSITION TO ASSESS IT.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Event:
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From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2830320
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - APRIL 18
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, XF
To: AMMAN BEIRUT MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cf38bda6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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